GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2967
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2001
ILLEGAL TOBACCO TRANSPORTATION
DUMPA MARY VIJAYAKUMARI;M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

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(a) whether complaints have been received regarding illegal and unauthorised tobacco transportation from Karnataka to Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; (

(c) whether Karnataka has cultivated illegally 8 million kgs. of tobacco affecting the Andhra Pradesh farmers of their produce; and (

(d) the remedial steps taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) & (b) : Yes, Sir. The Tobacco Board received a complaint from the Virginia Tobacco Growers` Association of India, Guntur, on the basis of a news item that appeared in a vernacular newspaper, that Karnataka tobacco was allegedly being stored illegally at certain villages of Andhra Pradesh. Surprise checks conducted by the Tobacco Board have not so far revealed any stocks of illegally transported tobacco of Karnataka origin in Andhra Pradesh. The complaint cannot be treated as well-founded since 17.61 million kgs of the 18.25 million kgs. of unauthorised tobacco in Karnataka in 2000-01, was allowed to be sold on the auction platforms of the Tobacco Board, subject to a penalty of 5% and an extra fee of Rs. 2 per kilogram. The vigilance squads of the Board prevented attempts to illegally transport 64,012 kgs. of Karnataka tobacco to AP. There is no restriction on the movement of legally produced and auctioned tobacco across State borders.

(c) & (d) : Despite well-publicised appeals by the Board to restrict production, farmers both in Andhra Pradesh and in Karnataka have been cultivating tobacco in excess of their registered quantity. In the State of Karnataka, the excess production in the year 2000-2001 amounted to 18.25 million kgs. However, this excess production cannot be deemed to have affected the interests of AP farmers since the quality of, and market for, the AP and Karnataka crop are substantially different.